

Douglas Budget

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Family pet lost in fire

Community rallies for family after blaze destroys home

By Matt Adelman
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Howard and Nikki Merriweather have only been married a few weeks, and Howard had just recently moved into Nikki's modular home near Northgate on the west side of Douglas when a fire Friday night destroyed nearly everything they owned.

The couple had left the house to visit Nikki's oldest son in town and her daughter was at work when the fire broke out at about 8 p.m. They were on their way back home when a neighbor called to tell them their house in the Kimball Trailer Park was on fire.

Douglas Volunteer Fire Department Chief Rick Andrews said the official cause of the blaze is unknown because the fire raged so hot and moved so quickly through

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HOUSE FIRE,
page A-2

Teen duo to embark on 550-mile nat'l park bike ride

By Jena Hengstler
Budget staff

Two Douglas teens, Lucie and Lilli Holt, along with their dad, Tom Holt, will set off this weekend on a grueling 550-mile bike ride through the Mighty Five National Parks of Utah.

Tom's wife Stephanie, Lucie and Lilli's mom, Havely, and their younger brother, Lane, will follow in the support van beginning May 28. Together, they will gut it out for five exhausting and amazing days, fueled by a vision and deep determination to help others.

The annual bike ride is aptly named "Ride the Range to Empower Women Veterans."

Watching them set out on this adventure, eyes filled with tears and a heart bursting with joy, will be one proud Pops. Keith Geis of Wheatland is the patriarch of this endeavor. Founder of Ride the Range and grandfather to Lucie, Lilli and Lane, he's a man of purpose, keen awareness, patriotism, and true philanthropy. His tenacity for giving back in meaningful ways has taken root in the hearts of his children and grandchildren, who are now carrying on a cause very near and dear to him.

Keith's daughter, Havely Bau-

Please see
THE LONG RIDE,
page A-3

'PLAY BALL'



Heather Halvorson courtesy photo

The fireworks clap loudly over the dark skies May 13 as Douglas Little League and Major League host their opening ceremonies to officially kick off the baseball seasons in Converse County, with Bridger Warner enjoying the scene from behind the homeplate fence. Two competitions - fastest cleats and last man standing - added to the festivities. Warner won fastest cleats, while Dominic Santillanes won last man standing.

Doug Carter, Little League President Doug Carter said, "The fireworks have been a part of opening night for many years, and we always try to make it great. I have to admit it was exceptional this year but that was due to the Douglas Volunteer Fire Department. Little League baseball (has) record numbers in Douglas with almost 100 kids registering for it this year. We were able to create four teams in both our Majors and Minors leagues . . . I would have to credit our board members and our Legion team for helping us put on some camps over the winter and keeping the interest of baseball up all year long."

Rimmer re-run awaits challenge

By Matt Adelman
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While Karen Rimmer has been in the Converse County Clerk's Office chair for nearly three years already, this election cycle could be the first real test of voters' approval of her. The Republican was appointed to fill the unexpired term of Lucile Taylor, then had to stand for election for the two years remaining on Taylor's term at the 2020 election.

Now, she is running for her first full term as clerk . . . and while as of Tuesday noon she had no competition, many observers fully expect someone to file against her by week's end, and possibly someone urged to run by the Republican Party leadership themselves.

Count Rimmer among those expecting some competition for her job.

And she's okay with that.

Rimmer said she knows she has gotten crossway with some in the county Republican Party leadership, especially over elections and election security, but she stands firmly behind her staff and that "proven fact" the 2020 elections in the county were fair, accurate and professional. The election procedures are in a constant state of review, she noted, and security and integrity remain the top priority, so that dictates her stance that sometimes rubs the GOP leadership

Please see **RIMMER RE-RUN**, page A-5

This week's weather

Wed. Thur. Fri. Sat. Sun.



High 71 81 87 76 67

Low 39 48 52 47 43



MEMORIAL DAY

is Monday, May 30th

Pay tribute to our fallen warriors

Who has filed now?

By Matt Adelman
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With four days still left to file to be on the primary election ballot, the Converse County Commission race already has become much more heated with two Republican challengers taking on three Republican incumbents.

The filing deadline for the primary election is 5 p.m. Friday, so additional candidates are expected to get their paperwork in by then.

The latest entry into the GOP primary for the top county seat is Pete Taylor of Douglas. He joins Trent Kaufman of Douglas as the two newcomers facing incumbents Jim Wilcox of Douglas, Tony Lehner of Glenrock and Robert Short of Douglas.

Taylor was unavailable for comment Tuesday.

In announcing his candidacy, Kaufman, a businessman who was born and raised in Converse County, said he has spent the last 30 years in healthcare upper management, managing multi-million dollar budgets. Kaufman also has served the elderly as a nursing home administrator and understands the issues related to elderly and disabled individuals.

On the state level, Republican Aaron Clausen of Douglas filed earlier this week for re-election to a modified version of his House seat in District 6. Tomi Strock of rural Douglas had filed for the Republican ticket as well. On the Democratic side, Tania Malone of Douglas is the sole candidate so far. HD6 encompasses the Converse County School District #1 boundary on the eastern side of the county following redistricting this year.

House District 62 is a new district created this year and takes in Converse County School District #2 (Glenrock/Rolling Hills areas) as well as a piece of western Natrona County (most notably Evansville). Two Republican candidates had filed for HD62 as of Monday night; no Democrats had filed yet. The GOP candidates are Forrest Chadwick of Evansville and Stan Mitchem of Glenrock.

In a story last week about the election filings, we made errors regarding statewide races. Eric Barlow was incorrectly called Senate President; he was Speaker of the House representing House District 3 but is now running for a Senate seat (District 23) from Campbell County. His current House seat no longer will represent any part of Converse County following

Please see
ELECTION FILINGS,
page A-2



Clifford J. Smith photo
Emily Cook gets down near the water to help clear the shrubbery about the bank making the South River Access more visible and accessible.

Fun, fixing & floating: OEOCC takes pride in cleaning up Platte

By Clifford J. Smith
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In between squalls and the beating sun the Outdoor Enthusiasts of Converse County (OEOCC) cleaned up three river access points in a day that saw wild temp and weather changes - yet the

group stayed positive and happy.

The goal of the day's work on May 21 was to repair and repaint the outhouses as well as make the floating areas on the Platte River more accessible and visible from the

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CLEANING UP, page A-3



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